

From: [Marlinga, Richard](#)
Cc: [Lowe, Willard](#)
Subject: ** UPDATE ** AFGE/EPA Telework and Remote Work Articles (Sent to R5 Supervisors & Managers)
Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2022 3:43:07 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Good afternoon Managers and Supervisors – based on additional information received concerning the interpretation of the COVID Safety Plan MOU, employees electing to apply for Telework or Remote Work should submit their initial applications to supervisors **no later than Monday, April 11, 2022.**

Thank you.

Richard Marlinga (he/his)

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Good afternoon Managers and Supervisors - This is an update to my January 22, 2022 e-mail below (Remote Work portion updated with February 18, 2020 e-mail language) with important information on the “no sooner than date” for AFGE bargaining unit (BU) employees’ return to the worksite, due dates for submitting Telework and Remote Work applications and other reentry-related information. Please review this information carefully and reach out to me or Scott Sharon with any questions.

[“No Sooner than Date” for BU Employees](#)

As you are aware, the most recent Future of Work [mass mailer](#) announced that after extensive negotiations with the unions the agency determined that it would begin the transition back to the workplace for all bargaining unit employees. The mass mailer also served as the 45-day ample notice, establishing **the pay period beginning April 24, 2022**, as the “no sooner than” date for the return to the workplace to begin for all bargaining unit employees, except for those with remote or fulltime telework agreements.

[Telework/Remote Work Applications](#)

Many AFGE BU employees have already submitted new Telework or Remote Work applications.

Although participation in these programs remains voluntary, employees electing to apply for Telework or Remote Work should submit their initial applications to you **no later than Monday, April 11, 2022.**

Please note that if an employee requests a new Telework or Remote Work Agreement, and a

decision is not made within the agreed upon timeframe identified in the Parties' Telework or Remote Work Articles, then the telework status and the approved AWL of that employee will not change until the applicable decision is provided to the employee.

[Other Reentry-Related Info](#)

Bargaining unit employees may work with their supervisor to establish a start date for their new telework or remote work agreement unless performing in-person mission critical work or facilities-related work. Employees who have been teleworking full time as a result of the pandemic and/or are on adjusted work schedules will not be required to change work status to be consistent with new articles (telework, remote work and/or work schedule) until the pay period April 24, 2022 except that, no AFGE bargaining unit employee will be required to physically return to the office **prior to May 2, 2022**.

Beginning on April 25, 2022, AFGE BU Employees not approved for remote work and in accordance with approved telework agreements will be required to return to the office as follows:

1. First Pay Period – At least one day a pay period;
2. Second Pay Period – At least two days a pay period;
3. Third Pay Period – Three days in the pay period (if applicable); and
4. Fourth Pay Period – Resume “normal” schedules.

Please contact sharron.scott@epa.gov with any questions or concerns.

[New Hire Info Requested](#)

Please inform me and sioco.wendell@epa.gov if you have any new hire employees that have not relocated to Chicagoland.

Thank you.

From: Marlinga, Richard

Sent: Saturday, January 22, 2022 3:09 PM

Cc: Sharon, Scott <sharon.scott@epa.gov>; Lowe, Willard <Lowe.Willard@epa.gov>

Subject: AFGE/EPA Telework and Remote Work Articles (Sent to R5 Supervisors & Managers)

Hello Managers and Supervisors – **This e-mail is meant for Management Use Only. Please do not forward or share this e-mail with your employees.** As you all know, the agency has established new policies for [Telework \(EPA Order 3110.32\)](#), [Remote Work \(EPA Order 3110.32A\)](#), and [Work Schedules \(EPA Order 3162\)](#) for non-bargaining unit employees. Most AFGE bargaining unit employees and supervisors of AFGE bargaining unit employees over the past week or so have had the opportunity to attend the AFGE Future of Work joint training provided by EPA and AFGE. You can read the [AFGE/EPA Telework Article](#), [AFGE/EPA Remote Work Article](#), and [AFGE/EPA Work Schedule Article](#) at [EPA@Work Policies and Agreements](#).

Although there is NO RUSH to get telework or remote work applications submitted, supervisors may have already started to receive them. As a reminder, the last Future of Work [mass mailer](#), indicated return to the office start dates would be delayed and current dates for return to the office are:

- Political appointees, SES, SL ST, and Title 42 managers are now scheduled to begin their reentry on February 28, 2022.
- Supervisors, managers, and other non-bargaining unit employees will begin their reentry on March 28, 2022.
- **Bargaining unit employees: TBD.**

The below guidance is being provided to assist managers and supervisor in processing telework and remote work applications. Please note, we are aware that several of the HQ forms are not set up for easy electronic signature. We have asked HQ to fix that. If HQ doesn't fix it in the next week or so, we will locally. In the meantime, the forms can be filled out, printed to PDF, and then signed how one would normally sign PDF documents.

Additionally, if a division is interested in Scott Sharon or me attending one of their management meetings to discuss questions about the telework/remote work applications/articles, please have your deputy director contact me.

TELEWORK AGREEMENTS

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It is expected that all teleworking bargaining unit employees will submit a new telework application in accordance with the new [AFGE/EPA Telework Article](#) prior to a return to the office. Things to consider;

- That the current [Telework Application](#) is submitted.
- That the current [Telework Self-Certification Safety Checklist](#) is submitted.
- That proper evidence of telework training is submitted.
 - Many bargaining unit employees have been teleworking for some time, they are likely have a copy of their telework training certificate of completion. If they need to take the Telework training (or are unable to find their certificate and/or evidence of completion), they may go to [FedTalent](#) and enroll in telework training (telework training enrollment is currently located top right of their FedTalent home screen—see screenshot below).



- Both regular and situational telework may be selected on the same application form.

- The desired schedule for after fully returning to the office should be entered in the Regular Telework Schedule section of the application form. The last Future of Work [mass mailer](#), indicated return to the office start dates would be delayed and current dates for return to the office for bargaining unit employees was: TBD.
- The Telework forms should be signed and routed electronically through e-mail. If you disapproves the application, you should return the form to the bargaining unit employee and retain a copy for your records. If you approve the form electronically, you should provide a copy to the bargaining unit employee and to your Administrative Officer (AO) for uploading in the OneDrive SharePoint folder (more details below).
- Division AOs and Deputies will continue to have full access to the Telework OneDrive SharePoint folder and AOs will be responsible for uploading their Division telework agreements.

INSTRUCTION FOR AOs

AOs should upload all approved applications to the OneDrive SharePoint folder in a new subfolder “Yr 2022” using the file naming convention of **LastName_FirstName TW**. Please note the following:

- ***The OneDrive SharePoint folder **will not** be used for medical telework or telework via reasonable accommodation, do not upload these requests in the OneDrive.***
 - Medical telework requests should be forwarded to the servicing LER Specialist for your Division/Program for processing and guidance. Approved medical telework agreements will be maintained by the servicing LER Specialist for purposes of records retention.
 - Reasonable accommodation telework requests should be forwarded to the R5 LORAC for processing and guidance. Approved reasonable accommodation telework agreements will be secured and maintained by the R5 LORAC for purposes of records retention.
- ***The OneDrive SharePoint folder **will not** be used for employees’ work schedule forms, do not upload these forms in the OneDrive.*** Managers should maintain this form in their file.

REGIONAL TELEWORK COORDINATOR

Finally, please join me in congratulating Rosalind Freeman who has been selected to serve on a 180-day detail to HQ’s Labor & Employee Relations Division (LERD). During Rosalind’s absence, Willard “Bud” Lowe will be stepping in as the R5 Telework Coordinator. Bud will be the point-of-contact for questions on telework and any access issues that may arise with the Telework OneDrive SharePoint folder. Bud may be contacted at (312) 353-2311 or lowe.willard@epa.gov.

REMOTE WORK:

This is a follow up to our previous communications about remote work applications. Some concerns have been raised that members of management have been asking employees to do more than what they are required to do as part of the [AFGE/EPA Remote Work Article](#). Per the Remote Work Article

employees are required to:

1. Completely fill out the [Remote Work Application](#), including clearly explaining:
 - a. “How the employee can perform all their duties as effectively from the RWL as from the Official Agency Worksite” and
 - b. “An explanation of how approval of the request will not diminish the agency’s ability to accomplish its mission and meet its operational goals.”
2. Completely fill out the [Form 3181-8 Remote Work Safety Checklist](#)
3. Provide their approved Work Schedule.
 - a. Employees should take a screen shot of approved schedule in PeoplePlus (attachment Work Schedule Screen Shot). If employee does not have a schedule in PeoplePlus, have employee submit a schedule request (attachment PPL Work Schedule Request) .
4. Provide evidence of Telework Training

Per the Remote Work Article, supervisors are required to review the employees remote work application and identifying any missing items in the request.

- **If a supervisor receives a remote work request and it does not include the information above, please use the attached template e-mail to ask the employee for more information.**
- **Please do not communicate with your employee regarding the remote work request, except through use of the attached template, without first discussing with Bud Lowe, Scott Sharon, or Rick Marlinga.** If bargaining unit employees have questions regarding remote work, refer them to the negotiated Article or their union representative.
- **If a supervisor receives additional questions from their managers, HR, or the DRA, they should answer the questions, without contacting or discussing the Remote Work Application with the employee further.** If the supervisory chain is unable to answer the question, they should discuss with HR.

As previously communicated, supervisors should use the following procedures when they receive a remote work request. A complete remote work request package must contain the following documents:

1. **All as individually attached PDFs (this is a change from two merged PDFs):**
 - [Remote Work Application](#)
 - Employee Position Description (PD) or detailed description of duties. HCB, Willard (Bud) Lowe. may assist in obtaining PD **(This is a new requirement)**
 - [Routing Sheet](#) **Please note, the routing sheet is for Management Use Only. Do not forward or share this routing sheet with your employees, as it is for Management Use Only.**
 - [Form 3181-8 Remote Work Safety Checklist](#)
 - Approved Work Schedule. Employees should take a screen shot of approved schedule in PeoplePlus (attachment Work Schedule Screen Shot). If employee does not have a schedule in PeoplePlus, have employee submit a schedule request (attachment PPL Work Schedule Request)

Evidence of Telework Training (discussed below in my January 31 email)

2. The HQ routing sheet does not have signature blocks for the Branch Manager and Division Director like the R5 routing sheet did. We are asking supervisor to use the below process for routing the completed remote work request package.

- Supervisor fills out and signs remote work routing Sheet. **Please note, the routing sheet is for Management Use Only. Do not forward or share this routing sheet with your employees, as it is for Management Use Only.** Please use the [Routing Sheet](#) link, as HQ is updating this routing sheet nearly every day.
- Supervisor signs the remote work application. Supervisor does not check the box for approval/disapproval on the remote work application, as the DRA will make that final determination.
- Supervisor forwards complete remote work request package to Willard (Bud) Lowe lowe.willard@epa.gov (copy to Division Director and Branch Manager) via e-mail.
- For their situational awareness, Division Director and Branch Manager reviews the application/routing sheet and may ask any clarifying questions (of the supervisor—not the employee) that may be needed. A positive response from the Division Director or Branch Manager is not required
- Supervisor sends e-mail to employee indicating “I have forwarded your remote work application to the next step in the review process.” **(Required by article)**

If you have any questions, please contact Willard “Bud” Lowe. Bud may be contacted at (312) 353-2311 or lowe.willard@epa.gov.

Thank you.

Richard Marlinga (he/his)

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